The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news comments and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1568 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1941 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 31, NO. 17

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

In the days before Mussolini and Hitler, May Day was a day of parades in the industrial cities of Europe, parades with a few riots and demonstrations thrown in. The usual headlines of the following morning would read something like this: "Twenty Dead in May Day Riots." There were even a few such affairs in this country.

May Day then was the traditional Labor Day of Europe, especially of the more radical labor groups. It was field day for the Communists, who would busily organize trouble for weeks beforehand and then set out when the fighting started so that usually innocent workers suffered the broken heads.

On this May Day there will be no riots in the cities of Europe, even though there will still be parades. This year Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin are organizing the parades and they do not permit riots within their own ballwicks.

The parades this year will not be a march of free and independent working men, but a procession of slaves, a procession of robots. The workers of Europe are no longer free. They have been completely subjugated by dictators. They have no rights, no privileges, no will of their own. They are merely the work-drones of the State. And, to tell the truth, the fault is to a large extent their own.

Worshipped False Gods

The workers of continental Europe were led astray and pursued strange paths and worshipped false Gods. Their faith in the democratic principles of trade unionism was not single and complete. They went looking for short cuts to a millenium and they got lost in the jungle of Communism.

The rise of totalitarianism in Italy and Russia and the collapse of democracy in France can be traced directly to the apostasy of labor. When the workers of Italy deserted democracy for Communism, they got Mussolini. When the workers of Germany grew impatient and rejected trade-unionism for Communism, they got Hitler. When the workers of France ignored the danger signals and were seduced by Communist leadership, Hitler moved right in and took them over.

It seems to us that the experiences of the workers of continental Europe should stand as an everlasting warning and reminder to the workers of America.

It seems to us that the intelligent working men and women of this country, having seen what happened to their brothers in Italy, Germany and France, should never forget the lesson.

It seems to us that the time is now so self-evident that there should no longer be any danger in this country of Communist control of the labor movement.

Yet there is danger, an immediate danger, the same danger that spelled ruin and degradation for the workers of continental Europe and that danger is right here in our midst in our c.n country.

The Need For Official Courage

The danger lies within the leadership of the CIO. That leadership from the beginning has flirted with Communism and has made bedfellows of the Communists. Ben Gitlow, former secretary of the Communist Party in the United States, testified at the recent deportation proceedings against Harry Bridges a few weeks ago that the birth of the CIO was the direct result of Communist plots to capture control of American labor. He ought to know.

In the five years since the CIO was formed, the influence of the Communists within that organization has been strengthened and intensified, rather than weakened.

Today, when the energies of the nation are being concentrated in a mighty national defense program, the CIO with its Communist leadership has become a bottleneck of progress. The CIO and its leadership are the power behind their aid to the President of the United States in the defense program. Instead, they have berated President Roosevelt as a "warmonger." They have denounced the war "imperialist" war, and the President as an "imperialist" warmonger." They have denounced the war "imperialist" war, and the President as an "imperialist" warmonger." They are seeking to make Great Britain the culprit. They have never officially ordered the policy of the United States in extending every possible aid to Great Britain and other democracies fighting against totalitarian aggressors. They have fomented minority strikes, Communist strikes and strikes of all kinds, to embarrass and hinder the defense program. They have followed the Communist Party line to the hilt.

Up to date they have gotten away with it because those in authority have lacked the courage to put the finger on the real cause of the trouble and have contented themselves with criticism of all labor. The American Federation of Labor, which is free of any vestige of Communist control, which is thoroughly patriotic, which is fully devoted to the cause of democracy here and abroad, by getting sick of this official shilly-shallying. On behalf of all American workers, the American Federation of Labor calls upon the Government of the United States to deal vigorously with the Communist problem within the CIO or risk its own downfall.

Green Urges Cooperation of Labor In New Defense Savings Bonds Plan

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor urged the officers of National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, City Central Bodies, and Federal Labor Unions to cooperate in every community with the plan of the United States Treasury, beginning May 1, to sell the new Defense Savings Bonds to all citizens as an important part of the National Defense Program.

Declaring that "in a recent conference with Secretary Morgenthau I assured him of our complete cooperation and support," Mr. Green said:

"The Federation of Labor is seeking to utilize the saving ability of individual citizens in order to cooperate with those which it must necessarily borrow during the critical years which lie ahead. The economic welfare of the entire country will be promoted and protected through the pursuit of such a policy.

"The Government could follow a more easy way by borrowing money directly from banks and established loan organizations. Such action might promote inflation and serve to increase our cost of living.

"The purchase of Defense Savings Bonds by millions of wage earners and by the membership of the American Federation of Labor will help reduce the cost of living and provide for the American people a greater reserve of savings which will serve a highly useful purpose during the period of adjustment following the termination of the present national emergency.

Pointing out that in recent years the U. S. Treasury has marketed "approximately four billion dollars worth of United States Savings Bonds" in small denominations, Mr. Green continued:

"If the larger program originated and which will be launched by the Treasury on May 1, the Government is appealing to the officers and members of the American Federation of Labor to purchase Government securities which will be offered in small denominations. Plans which will provide for the purchase of these bonds out of wage earners' savings so that payments can be made as easily as possible will be formulated and applied. This means that the financial strength of the wage earners of our country by being mobilized in support of this systematic savings plan can be used to make that nation stronger and safer than ever before.

"Because of national defense many industrial workers receiving low pay had an opportunity to get better jobs in defense industries. Moreover, the additional employment caused by the defense program has resulted in general purchasing power and expanded the demand for goods, underwear and children's clothing," he said.

"The combination of these factors gave labor increased bargaining power, more confidence and more independence in standing up for its rights. Wage increases won in all parts of the country—New England, the South and the Pacific Coast—testify to the growing unionism in attempting to obtain improved conditions and a fair share in the increased productivity of the plants in which they worked."

Vinson Bill Would Cause Chaos, Meany Tells House Rules Committee

Washington, D. C.—In straightforward, two-fisted style, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany spoke up for the rights of American workers before the House Rules Committee and condemned the Vinson (Georgia) bill which would outlaw mediation and anti-closed shop bill.

A few labor-hating Congressmen present thought they might get a chance to bait the witness, but Mr. Meany silenced them with vigor and despatch.

The American Federation of Labor opposes the Vinson bill, he declared, because the measure seeks to destroy "fundamental rights" of labor. When Rep. Cox (Georgia) said he would see how a 25-day cooling-off period as provided in the bill would injure labor, Mr. Meany replied emphatically:

"We'd be against such a compulsory cooling-off period even if it were only for ten minutes. If Congress can compel our people to work for twenty-five days against their will, it can compel them to work for twenty-five months or twenty-five years."

"Don't you think Congress ought to do something like this if we're going to beat off the threat of Hitler?" Cox persisted.

"We can get forced labor and this kind of a bill from Hitler without undergoing the cost and expense of the defense program," Mr. Meany acidly responded.

Charging that the Vinson Bill was "punitive" in purpose, Mr. Meany declared that the labor movement has been playing ball," he insisted, pounding the table. "We've had no strikes but they were very few. The American Federation of Labor has made and will make every sacrifice the Government and our country call upon us to make. The record of co-operation made by the A. F. of L. has no parallel in the history of industrial relations of any country. Let me tell you of one particular instance. The President of the building and Construction Trades Department (John Dolan) has collapsed after traveling 84,000 miles from the Army cantonment to another to provide necessary workers and keep the jobs running smoothly. The Secretary of War can testify to that."

The Vinson Bill, Mr. Meany declared, would not help the defense program because it would destroy and delay production and cause chaos.

"If you pass this bill," he said, "you will be playing right into the hands of Communist agents. I cannot thing of any single thing you might do that would be more calculated to increase membership in the Communist Party than to tell the workers of this country they have to work whether they want to or not."

Mr. Meany hailed the present point when he assailed the "freezing" of present open shop and the prevention of new closed shop agreements to which the bill seeks to enforce. He pointed out it would be unfair to establish business firms which refuse to labor because newly formed competitors would have an advantage over them.

"The American Federation of Labor has been and is consistently in favor of voluntary mediation and arbitration but it is absolutely and unalterably opposed to compulsion," Mr. Meany concluded. "We suggested the creation of the National Defense Mediation Board of which Dr. Frank Graham is now a member. The record of this Board has been highly successful. We ask that it be given a fair chance to handle this problem along voluntary lines. The only way the national defense program can succeed is with the voluntary cooperation of free labor."

Anti-Union Discrimination In Hiring Held Unlawful by U. S. Supreme Court

Washington, D. C.—The Supreme Court ruled in an epochal decision that anti-union "discrimination in hiring" is "by direction unlawful" and employers who discriminate against union applicants for jobs can be ordered to hire them back pay.

The decision by Justice Frankfurter sustained the right of the board in an employer subject to the National Labor Relations Act may not refuse to hire workers because of their affiliations with a labor union.

The court upheld this principle unanimously but divided on the issue Justice Frankfurter's decision that the National Labor Relations Board could require that wages be paid from the time of rejection to men denied jobs because of union activities. Justices Roberts did not participate.

The ruling sustained the board's right to order the Phelps Dodge Corporation to employ and give back pay to two men who sought employment at the company's copper mine at Bisbee, Ariz., but sent the matter back to the board for further action in each case that such orders are necessary to effectuate the policies of the Wagner Act.

"We do not intend to enter a province that belongs to the board or that we do so," said Justice Frankfurter. "All we ask of the board is to give clear indication that it has exercised the discretion with which Congress has empowered it. This is the most emphatically the authority of the board."

The opinion upheld the power of the board to require reinstatement of wrongfully discharged employees even when they have obtained substantially equivalent employment elsewhere. This liberty was demanded by the board for a determination of whether "in employing that power the policies of the act would be enforced."

The dissenting opinion by Chief Justice Hughes and Justice Stone agreed that the company's refusal to hire two applicants for jobs because of their union membership was an unfair labor practice.

But Hughes and Stone took issue with the majority's reinstatement and back pay conclusions.

ILGWU Gains 10,000 New Members, Dubinsky Discloses in Report

Atlantic City, N. J.—The demand for labor in defense industries has produced a distinct rise in prices and higher wages for workers engaged in the manufacture of women's apparel, David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, A. F. of L., declared in a report presented to representatives of the union's general executive board at its quarterly meeting in Atlantic City.

Mr. Dubinsky said 10,000 garment workers had been brought into the union in the last few months. In the preceding three years there had been no increase in the membership total, he added.

Green, Woll, Urge All Local Unions To Raise Funds to Aid British Labor

New York N. Y.—President Green, honorary chairman of the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor, joined Matthew Woll, vice-president of the A. F. of L. and chairman of the Committee, in asking more than 800 central labor bodies and 30,000 local unions to take part in a nation-wide collection to "cooperate in our nation-wide drive to aid British Labor," declaring that "the best way for labor here to do is in full accordance with the last convention of the American Federation of Labor."

The call stated that organized labor in this country "pledged our full support and these brave fighters for freedom."

Mr. Woll in announcing progress of the campaign to aid British Labor, declared, "there are now 41 State chairmen to aid British Labor, including the U. S. District Attorney, Mr. Carl Sackett, for the State of Wyoming.

"In Mississippi," he continued, "is the only State that has not responded to date, and I am certain that reasons extraneous to their desires to aid British Labor have caused the delay in responding."

It was further reported that at the recent convention of the Louisiana State Federation of Labor, held at Baton Rouge, a resolution was unanimously adopted endorsing the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor "was enthusiastically adopted."

TRUCK DRIVERS WIN PITTSBURGH STRIKE

Pittsburgh, Pa.—Officials of the Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs and Helpers of America, AFL affiliate, announced that the union had won a record-setting wage increase and other gains from 18 of the city's largest transfer companies following a short strike. The walkout was ordered when the Pittsburgh chapter of the Pennsylvania Furniture Warehousemen's Association had refused to continue contractual negotiations with the union.

News Briefs

ELMIRA VALVE CO. POLL GIVES AFL BIG MAJORITY

Elmira, N. Y.—At the end of a three-month campaign by A. F. of L. union locals to organize workers at the Kennedy Valve Manufacturing Company's two plants here, an election to choose collective bargaining representatives held by the National Labor Relations Board resulted in an 81 per cent majority of the employes in the A. F. of L. local.

The victorious unions were the Pattern Makers League of North America, the International Association of Machinists, and the International Molders Union of North America.

HIGHER WAGE RATE WON BY AFL CEMENT WORKERS

Philadelphia, Pa.—Samuel Diskan, vice president of the AFL United Cement, Lime and Gypsum Workers International Union, announced that an agreement raising basic wage rates from 5 cents to 7 cents an hour had been signed by the union and the Lehigh Portland Cement Co. and the Atlantic Cement Co., subsidiary of the Lehigh Valley.

1,173,663 CIVILIANS HOLD GOVERNMENT JOBS

Washington, D. C.—The United States Civil Service Commission reported that the executive branch of the Government employed 1,173,663 civilians in February, 1941, as compared with 1,151,148 in January, an increase of 2 per cent. Over 80 per cent of this increase was in the 847,000 permanent employes paid from regular funds. Employes of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia increased to 161,587, compared with the January figure of 158,587.

PHILADELPHIA STRIKE WON BY AFL INSURANCE AGENTS

Philadelphia, Pa.—Following a week's walkout of the agents employed by the Industrial Life Insurance Co. and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., of Philadelphia, because the company had refused to recognize the A. F. of L. as their bargaining representative and had discharged two of their union workers, officials of the company agreed to an election to determine the wishes of the employes. When the ballots were counted it was found that 65 out of 68 employes had voted for the A. F. of L.

The company reinstated the two discharged employes with back pay, which they have obtained substantially equivalent employment elsewhere. This latter was demanded by the union board for a determination of whether "in employing that power the policies of the act would be enforced."

The dissenting opinion by Chief Justice Hughes and Justice Stone agreed that the company's refusal to hire two applicants for jobs because of their union membership was an unfair labor practice.

But Hughes and Stone took issue with the majority's reinstatement and back pay conclusions.

MINIMUM P. R. TOBACCO STRIPPERS WAGE URGED

Washington, D. C.—A recommendation for the establishment of a minimum wage of 30 cents an hour in the leaf tobacco industry of Puerto Rico was urged with General Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the U. S. Department of Labor by the Puerto Rican Industry Committee, Magr. Francis J. Haas, chairman.

"The 30-cent minimum wage," the committee's report stated, "was determined to be the highest minimum wage rate which would not substantially curtail employment in such industry or give unfair advantage to Puerto Rico a competitive advantage over any industry in the United States outside of Puerto Rico."

CHEMICAL CO. SIGNS AFL UNION CONTRACT

Akron, Ohio.—The International Council of Chemical and Allied Industries Unions, AFL affiliate, of Chicago, Ill., has "obtained the first signed contract ever" into by The General Chemical Company, a subsidiary of the General Analine and Film Corporation, and been designated to represent the powerhouse employes and railway shop laborers employed by the Texas and Pacific Railway Company.

As a result of a check-up made by the National Mediation Board mediators, the board also designated the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes to represent the maintenance of way employes of the Pittsburgh, Chartiers & Youghiogheny Railway Company, and the Brotherhood of Railway Carman of America to represent carmen (including coach cleaners) their helpers and apprentices, employed by the Kentucky and Indiana Terminal Railroad Company.

National Defense Must Go Forward On Democratic Basis, Green Insists

FORD WORKERS ARE FLOCKING TO A.F.L.

Thousands of New Members Signed As NLRB Election Nears

Detroit, Mich.—A revulsion of feeling against the C.I.O. and a recognition that the American Federation of Labor can bring them substantial benefits has resulted in the signing of many thousands of Ford Motor Company employes as members of the Federal Labor Unions at the River Rouge and Lincoln plants in the last fortnight, John J. Murphy, director of the A. F. of L.'s Ford organizing campaign, said.

This flocking of Ford workers to the American Federation of Labor standard indicate a "smashing victory" for the A. F. of L. when the National Labor Relations Board's collective bargaining election is held at the River Rouge and Lincoln plants in the near future, Mr. Murphy declared.

He pointed out that 98 per cent of the thousands of workers employed by the Ford Motor Company in the Detroit area are "self-respecting wage earners" and that the recent minority strike staged by the United Automobile Workers—C.I.O., convinced them that the C.I.O. union is "a radical type of organization which they strongly disapprove."

"On the other hand, the American Federation of Labor stands for the sound, and effective principles enunciated so many years ago by Samuel Gompers, and these principles have a great appeal for the overwhelming majority of Ford employes," Mr. Murphy said.

The American Federation of Labor organizing campaign in the Ford plants at the Detroit area is now in high gear. Mr. Murphy has a large corps of experienced organizers assisting him. The A. F. of L. has two radio programs daily in which the advantages of membership in the A. F. of L. are expounded, and the Detroit newspapers are giving the Federation's campaign full support. An overwhelming victory in the NLRB election extensive, daily coverage.

Detroit is worried by the vigorous A. F. of L. drive and by the knowledge that the recent Ford strike is acting as a boomerang against them, the C.I.O. leaders here have tried to "patch up" present troubles in the Ford workers rifts into the U.A.W.-C.I.O. These methods have been ineffectual, however.

Of immense benefit to the A. F. of L. campaign has been the establishment and smooth functioning of grievance machinery under which the A. F. of L. is obtaining prompt adjustment of the grievances of A. F. of L. members employed in the Ford Motor Company. This grievance machinery was established without the necessity of a strike.

In contrast, the grievance setup of the C.I.O., which the U.A.W.-C.I.O. united to as a great prize in the recent city strike, is not functioning at all.

As the time of the National Labor Relations Board election draws closer," Mr. Murphy said, "all indications point to a victory for the A. F. of L. The workers employed at Ford's have made up their minds how they will vote in the poll and it is clear that a large majority will vote for the A. F. of L. rather than the C.I.O.

"There is immense resentment among the Ford workers against the U.A.W.-C.I.O. because of the minority strike which that organization staged at the Ford plant. Only a very small fraction of the Ford personnel was in sympathy with that minority strike. As a result of it they all lost wages which they did not want to lose and which they could ill-afford to lose."

New NLRB Ruling on Workers' Unit Presages West Coast A. F. of L. Victory

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor won its first important victory which may have far-reaching effects when the National Labor Relations Board, reversing a previous decision, ruled that the employes of the Parkersburg, W. Va., plant of the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company were entitled to their own bargaining unit.

In the earlier decision, rendered before former Chairman J. Warren Madden was retired from the board, the NLRB held that all six plants of the company constituted a single bargaining unit covering the entire U. S. CIO admitted it had no members at the Parkersburg plant and the Ford Company were entitled to their own bargaining unit.

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The new ruling paved the way for breaking down of the coastwise bargaining unit established by the NLRB several years ago in the case of longshoremen on the Pacific Coast.

This case, one of the outstanding examples of previous NLRB bias against the American Federation of Labor, was recently reopened at the request of the American Federation of Labor and a new decision from the Board is expected in a short time. If the Board in the longshoremen's case follows the reasoning in the Libbey-Owens-Ford decision, thousands of A. F. of L. longshoremen, who were forced into Harry Bridges' control by the former NLRB ruling, will be able to vote freely on their own union.

Employes of the Parkersburg plant of Libbey-Owens-Ford will now be entitled to vote in a Labor Board election for their own bargaining representatives and a clear-cut victory for the American Federation of Labor union appears assured.

Board Member Edwin S. Smith dissented from the new decision in the case. His term expires next August. It is a safe prediction that he will not be reappointed.

SILVERSMITHS CO. SIGNS UNION LABEL AGREEMENT

New York, N. Y.—Samuel E. Beardsley, general secretary-treasurer of the International Jewelry Workers' Union, announced that the union had signed a label agreement with the Elgin Silversmiths Co., Inc., of New York, N. Y. The firm manufactures sterling silver hollow ware and also ecclesiastical goods in both gold and silver. "An opportunity is now offered for the first time to secure silverware with the union label stamped thereon," Mr. Beardsley said.

Calls For Educational Campaign To Bolster Faith In Power of Democracy

Washington, D. C.—Debunking the boasts of totalitarian propaganda, President William Green of the American Federation of Labor called for a nation-wide educational campaign to bolster faith in democracy and in the power of democracy to defend itself "on a democratic basis."

In a nationally-broadcast address, which was especially directed to the twentieth anniversary dinner of the Workers Education Bureau of America in New York City, Mr. Green said:

"The five million members of the American Federation of Labor stand resolute in their faith in democracy, their faith in progress, their faith in individual freedom.

"They will work and sacrifice and fight, if necessary, to safeguard and defend their faith. They are confident that democracy is strong enough to defend itself on a democratic basis. They will not listen to the false plea that democracy must cut off its right arm, destroy freedom must abolish, in order that our democracy and freedom may be preserved.

"The way to win is not to surrender but to work and fight with all the might of free men, with all the determination and all the faith that God has given us."

Mr. Green assailed the false propagandas of totalitarian dictators which is designed to weaken popular faith in democracy. He said:

"They boast of victories, but those victories are not victories of science, not victories of human enlightenment, not victories of human progress. They are merely victories of brute force, victories that have been achieved by the callous murder of countless numbers of innocent men, women and children.

"They boast of efficiency, but their efficiency is not the efficiency of willing, happy human beings working together of their own free will for the accomplishment of a lofty purpose. Their efficiency is merely the efficiency of slavery, the efficiency of the whip, the efficiency that has been achieved by the shameful degradation of million of human beings.

"These truths must constantly be hammered home to the American people and broadcast to all the world. I earnestly request the Workers Education Bureau of America to do its part. There is no danger when people know the truth, but the truth is the only danger that out of ignorance the truth may be lured by a false vision of strength to embrace a philosophy which seeks to enslave them for all time. That is what we must combat."

Reiterating the pledge of the American Federation of Labor and its five million members to uphold every possible aid to Great Britain and other democracies threatened by the menace of Hitler, Mr. Green explained:

"We all have seen what happens to the working men and women of nazi-Germany through the Gestapo system and a totalitarian form of Government. Peace gives way to war. The rights of free and independent human beings—such as free speech, free assemblage, a free press and the freedom to worship God as one sees fit—disappear. Wage scales built up through long years of economic struggle are destroyed. Without the serfs of a Government which denies freedom every form of labor than the consent of the governed. Their place and conditions of employment are fixed by dictatorial decree. They can no longer call their very souls their own.

"Such a fate is so abhorrent to American workers that they are willing to make every possible sacrifice to defend it and the workers of other lands from it."

Southern Labor Spurns Defense Strikes; Blames Them On CIO Communists

Atlanta, Ga.—Southern Labor has spoken through four great conventions of Southern State Federations of Labor within the past few days, and resolutions adopted in each of these conventions have emphasized the following facts:

That there have been no strikes on any national defense jobs in the South.

That the A. F. of L. unions have done and are doing practically all work on all national defense jobs in the Southern States.

That there will be no strikes on any defense job in the Southern States where the A. F. of L. unions have the power, through collective bargaining rights, to prevent strikes.

That strikes occurring in other sections of the country have been caused and called by the CIO, the open ally of the Communist Party members and fellow-travelers operate.

That hysterical demand for legislation, such as the Vinson bill, has been caused by the activities of subversive groups working through CIO.

The conventions were held by the Florida, Louisiana, Georgia and Alabama State Federations of Labor. President William Green, speaking at the Alabama State Federation of Labor convention, sounded the keynote when he said:

"Strikes in defense industries are to be found only in those places where the CIO has been active. Green told the press of the South.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION INCREASES 31 PER CENT

Washington, D. C.—The dollar volume of all new construction as measured by permits issued was 31 per cent greater during the first quarter of 1941 than during the like period of 1940, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins reported.